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241/463 the person who is destroying his abode. These big trees have a money-value, and are sold to the wood-cutters and carpenters, who use the timber in their own industry. On the whole the Nupe are reluctant to cut down big trees, especially in the town, for they appreciate the shade which they give. But it happens occasionally that the owner of a barren tree, in need of money, has it cut down and sells the timber to wood-cutters or carpenters.

185/651/322 In the interest of forest-preservation the felling of certain trees has been made subject to the payment of a licence fee varying in amount from 5*s.* 6*d.* to £1 or more. This new rule involves an economic re-adjustment which the people—professional timber-workers as well as ordinary farmers—have not yet been able to achieve. The carpenters of Bida almost went on strike when the new licence was introduced, and refused to manufacture any more wooden stools and other products of their craft for fear of being unable to sell their goods for the higher price which the licence would necessitate. Another illustration is the case of [672] an old man, a carpenter, who, unaware of the new rule, had bought a barren locust-bean tree in Bida for felling, for 7*s.* 6*d.* When he was requested to pay the licence fee of 5*s.* 6*d.* he was unable to do so. His case came before the Bida Court, but in consideration of his poverty and age the court reduced the licence fee for him to 1*s.* 4*d.* It is too early yet to say what effect this licence will have on the Nupe wood-working industry: whether it will lead to a technical readjustment and a change in the kind of timber used, or to a gradual deterioration and eventual disappearance of the indigenous wood-carving technique, which is already feeling the competition of the cheaper, and infinitely uglier, products in Western style: packing-case chairs and tables, deck-chairs, and the like.[1]

[323/325/171] [1] It is to be feared that it will be this latter case with which Nupe wood-carving will meet. In other crafts these changes in material and partly style are already an accomplished fact: thus the Bida glass-workers have almost completely abandoned making their own glass, and make their bangles and beads of smelted down bottle glass of European manufacture; similarly the Nupe blacksmiths buy cheap sheet-iron at the trading stores, and no longer smelt their own iron ore.

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326 especially costly. It was in form of a brass tray for kola-nuts which
467 had been made in the workshop of the *Muku* himself and to the cost of
which (6*s*.) every brass-worker had contributed his penny or halfpenny.
431 The *Etsu* accepted the gift with thanks and sent a return gift of a large
bowl of kola-nuts (worth 10*s*.), which was distributed among all the brass-smiths of the town. If here the organizing influence of the guild-master becomes again visible, the 'individualistic' element is present also. For, in addition to the collective gift, individual workers are free to send their own personal gifts and to attract the attention of the court to their own particular style and skill. Thus one of the Bida brass-smiths presented the *Etsu* at the Sallah with a covered brass bowl, worth 3*s*. He was rewarded shortly afterwards, when the *Etsu* placed an order for new horse-bits, in European style, with him.

GLASS-WORKERS

323 The glass-worker guild represents the most strongly organized and
467 most conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft-guilds. In the
whole of Nupe there exists only one group of glass-workers, the *masagá*,
173 who live in Bida, in a separate quarter of the town which is named after
them *masagá fu*, *efu* (quarter) of the glass-workers. They regard themselves almost as a distinct tribal group. They have a tradition that they came originally from Egypt, and brought their art with them from the old home. Their tradition has also preserved the names of the various towns and countries through which they passed on their long journey which took them, eventually, to Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom.[1] They had stopped at none of these many towns and villages as they could not find there the kind of earth necessary for the making of glass. They settled then in Gbara, where, as their tradition has it, they arrived at the time of Tsoede. Later, when the kings of Nupe moved their residence to other places, the glass-workers followed the court, to Jima, Lade, Rabá, and, finally, Bida.

323 The *masagá* obtain their raw material both by making their own glass
438 and smelting down bottles of European manufacture. The latter kind of
raw material, easy to obtain, and more attractive because of the variety of colours which it offers, has to a large extent replaced the original native-made glass.[2] Bida women, wives of the *masagá* as well as women from outside, regularly scour the town for empty bottles from European stores, households, offices, and dispensaries (where they can obtain the highly appreciated amber-coloured medicine bottles). Bottles of various kinds from other parts of Nigeria also find their way to the *masagá* quarter, bought up locally and transported to Bida, partly by railway, by the enterprising women traders.

323 The *masagá* nevertheless still produce their own glass as well. A

[1] My informants mentioned the following towns and countries: the 'land of the Arabs', the 'land of Bornu', Kano, and Zozo (Zaria).

[2] The actual cost of production is lower in the case of native-made glass. But this fact is balanced by the time-saving made possible by the use of bottle glass and also by the greater demand for coloured glass-ware.

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certain type of glass, black in colour and of rather crude texture, which is bought widely in Nigeria, is made exclusively by the traditional method. I have had opportunity of studying this traditional technique of glass-making—a technique which is kept a secret by the glass-workers and which has never yet been recorded. Several writers on Nigeria, in fact, maintain that it has long since fallen into disuse and is even no longer remembered by the people. This native glass is called *bikini*, as against the glass gained from smelting down bottles, the name for which is *kallaba*, 'bottle'. The process of glass-making is long and complicated; it takes from three to five days according to the quantity of glass made. The glass can be made in the ordinary glass-maker's workshop, but the furnace must be re-dug especially for the purpose, since the furnaces used normally for glass-smelting are too wide and too shallow. The same men who ordinarily work in the workshop also carry out the making of glass. The glass-maker's workshop is built somewhat like the Nupe smithy, but has only one round furnace in the centre of the hut. For the purpose of glass-making the furnace is dug 5 feet deep and 2 feet wide. Throughout the process its mouth is covered with pot-sherds and broken calabashes which leave only a narrow passage for the smoke. As good Mohammedans, the *masagá* invariably start their glass-making on Friday afternoon, after their return from the mosque. The various ingredients have been collected and arranged inside the workshop: earth (the same earth that has been dug out of the furnace),[1] soda (*kamwa*) of the kind that is brought by Hausa caravans from Lake Chad, water in pots, and a vast quantity of firewood. The soda, which has been pounded to a fine powder, is mixed with sand and a little water till it gains a mud-like consistency. The mixture is placed on the bottom of the furnace, with firewood and a layer of grass for the lighting of the fire on top. The fire is lit, and the furnace is kept ablaze, day and night, till the process is finished. The men work in shifts so that there are always four workers tending the furnace; adding fuel, and occasionally probing the bottom of the furnace with long iron rods. The heat is so intense that the workers have to put up mat screens as protection. Six or seven hours after the lighting of the furnace large quantities of water are added, together with a handful of slag from a blacksmith's forge. After another twelve hours the substance in the furnace becomes liquid, *ke nuwā na*, 'like water', and after eight hours again the process is completed. The glass, a red-glowing semi-liquid mass, is fished out with long iron sticks and left to harden and cool on the sand outside. The cooling takes five to six hours, after which time the glass is ready for use in the other furnaces, where the finished products—bangles and beads—are manufactured. The colour of the raw glass is a deep glossy black. The *masagá*

[1] The sand is called *jikasa*, which is the Nupe name for ordinary sand. The glass-workers informed me that the sand everywhere in the locality was suitable for glass-making. When I returned from Nigeria I brought with me samples both of the Nupe glass and the ingredients used in glass-making. Thanks to Professor Seligman the Courtauld Institute in London undertook to test the glass and the glass manufacture, by attempting to produce glass from these ingredients. The attempt was fully successful. For a fuller report on this experiment, and also on the technique of Nupe glass-making, see *Man*, 1940, 107.

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323 have never possessed the art of colouring their glass. They have to do it indirectly, by mixing it with coloured bottle-glass. They also ornament their dark glass with dots, lines, and circles in various bright colours: the red colour is obtained by smelting down thin iron sticks, other colours by smelting down coloured glass or coloured glass beads (Venetian beads mostly).

Glass is, as a rule, made only in one workshop at a time, while the other workshops carry on the ordinary routine work. Men from other workshops who need new glass contribute soda and sometimes also firewood (or else pay in money for their share in firewood), and receive a proportionate quantity of raw glass. They pay the men who were tending the furnace in kind, returning to them a small quantity of the newly made glass.

The further treatment of the raw *bikini* glass corresponds in every detail to the treatment of bottle-glass, except that the latter has to be crushed into small pieces before being used. It is smelted down, again, over the ordinary furnace, until it is semi-liquid and can be formed into beads and bangles of different shape and size. This finished glass is called *karuwa*. The furnace in which the raw glass was made is later rebuilt and adapted for this new work. It is made a little wider, banked up with a mud wall 1 foot high, and provided with bellows.

Nupe glass-making implies a strict organization of work and a well-planned distribution of the various tasks among the whole community of glass-makers. The assignment of tasks varies from day to day, according to when a particular workshop has completed the work in hand. The *masagá* quarter numbers thirteen workshops, and each workshop performs its assigned tasks. In one hut you may perhaps find the making of *bikini* glass going on, while in another molten glass is formed into black bangles; in a third workshop coloured bangles are manufactured, or small black beads; another workshop, again, may specialize in blue and red beads that day, and so forth. The workers, four to six in number, sit round the furnace. One of them, as a rule a small boy, is blowing the bellows. The raw glass is thrown into the furnace, where it is left to liquefy. The glass-worker sticks small lumps of the semi-liquid glass upon the point of a long thin iron rod. Gripping the rod in his right hand, he holds it over the mouth of the furnace and, while the glass liquefies further in the heat, he rotates the rod rapidly, throwing the glass lump with quick, calculated movements into any shape he wants. A second rod, held in the left hand, helps in the process, and is used to produce the width of the bangle or to tap a bead into shape. In the single workshop the work is, again, carefully divided up: while one worker prepares the liquid glass, another shapes it into bangles or beads, and another adds the coloured ornaments.

The scheme of collaboration may change from day to day; every worker, frequently even including the man or boy at the bellows, is, in fact, a fully fledged all-round craftsman. The trained worker performs his tasks with ease and rapidity and, thanks to the smooth co-operation between the workers, the whole workshop equally maintains a very high speed of production. It takes one worker between three and four

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minutes to produce a medium-sized bangle; I estimated the total daily output of a single workshop at from fifty to sixty bangles.

The finished articles, the coloured and ornamented bangles and beads, are left to cool in a heap of ashes inside the hut to be collected later in large baskets and to be put aside for the traders who call regularly at the *masagá* quarter. The glass-workers have a small but busy market of their own in the centre of their quarter. To this market the traders in bottle-glass bring their goods, women from neighbouring hamlets and farms the daily supply of firewood, and other women traders grain and various food-stuffs for the households of the glass-workers. The traders in the finished article, however, buy the bangles and beads directly from the producers, i.e. the individual workshop. These traders are both men and women and, among the women, both wives of the glass-workers and women from outside. The *masagá* themselves never trade their glass-ware. Bida glass is bought and sold all over Nigeria—it is to be seen in every larger market of the country in Lagos in the south, and in Kano in the north. There is a steady demand for it, and the *masagá* work regularly six days a week (resting only on Friday), all through the year, always certain of disposing easily of their output. They have neither time nor inclination for additional agricultural work, not even in the restricted form of farming 'for the mouth' which is common among all other Nupe craftsmen.

The people who work together in the same workshop are, as in the case of blacksmiths and brass-smiths, mostly close relations. But among the glass-workers the group which shares a common workshop also forms a single labour- or *efakó*-unit, working under a common head who organizes the group work, disposes of its output, and, in *efakó* manner, controls the income produced by the group. Even distant relations or strangers who have joined a workshop fall under the *efakó* rules. The labour organization of the *masagá*, then, does not allow for an individual *bucá* income in addition to the group income. Instead we find a new arrangement in the form of small regular 'wages' (at the rate of 2*d*. a day) which the *efakó* head pays his adult co-workers out of the income produced by the group. He keeps the rest and, with it, defrays the costs of production, i.e. the costs of fuel and raw glass or the occasional purchase of new tools from the blacksmiths, as well as the various family expenses entailed in his position as *efakó* head. This financial arrangement is clearly necessitated by the special conditions of labour: it would indeed be extremely difficult to calculate the share of the individual worker in this strongly co-operative form of production. The intensive co-operation itself is explained by the nature of this 'mass production' and by the demands of efficiency and economy: the use of a common furnace and a common store of fuel and raw material, the specialized tasks of the individual workshops and, in the single workshop, the elaborate division of labour, are all calculated to ensure a high degree of efficiency and economy. We note that the means of production are partly produced by joint labour (e.g. the building of the furnace), and partly purchased by the leader of the labour-unit out of his share in the group income (e.g. the iron tools, the fuel); and we note further that this method of production,

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which, in the interest of efficiency, has evolved centralized control of labour and means of production on a comparatively large scale, comes closer than any other Nupe craft to the principle of the modern factory system.

We have already seen that in the group at large, i.e. in the glass-workers' guild, a similar intensive co-operation obtains. Its organization falls to the guild-head, who assigns the different tasks to the various workshops and is responsible for the general planning of production. This planning must take into account the varying conditions of the market, and we find, in fact, that the guild-head, without interfering with the commercial transactions of the individual workshop, regularly consults traders and middlemen who visit the *masagá* quarter, and maps out accordingly the scheme of work for his community. On my many visits to the *masagá* I found that the guild-head could always tell me what kind of work was carried out in the various workshops, or when a particular workshop would start on a new task. The guild-head, who styles himself *Masagá*, has his own workshop, where his sons and brothers are working. He does not often work there himself, but certain difficult tasks, such as the making of very big, heavy bangles, which fetch the highest price, he alone can perform. The guild-head assists his co-workers with advice and practical help, also with small loans of money for the purchase of raw material or fuel; he arbitrates in internal quarrels, and he is, like all Nupe guild-heads, the accredited representative of his guild at the Nupe court.

The ever-expanding business of the Bida glass industry involves an almost permanent need of new labour. Formerly the glass-workers bought slaves and trained them in the craft in order to enlarge their machinery of production. To-day they are regularly accepting apprentices. In 1936 five young men were being trained as glass-workers. An apprentice applies to the guild-head, who will then place him in charge of a certain workshop. The training is calculated to take three years, during which time the apprentices continue to live in their own homes and come to the *masagá* quarter only to work. But when their apprenticeship is completed they not only move into the *masagá* quarter, but are expected to marry *masagá* women (as did also the slaves in former days). This adoption into the kinship group is considered essential and is as much a qualification for the practice of the craft as is the technical training itself. Thus the monopoly of the glass-workers is kept intact, and no new branches can be established outside their organization. Kinship interests and kinship co-operation are enlisted in the service of professional co-operation and solidarity and in maintaining the continuity of a highly specialized, monopolized and almost secret, technique of production. Economic interests, in turn, are seen to be sufficiently powerful to effect a radical adjustment in the kinship structure, and to create, in a patrilineal society, a matrilineal enclave.

WEAVERS

The weavers, called *edeluciži*, present another instance of the tripartite organization of Bida crafts. Each of the three *ekpā* of the town harbours one of the three guild sections of the weavers. However,

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maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is supplied by the endogamous organization of the *koni* groups, which marry mostly into other *koni* families of the same or a neighbouring village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *koni* woman with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages. Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagd*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagd fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagd* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

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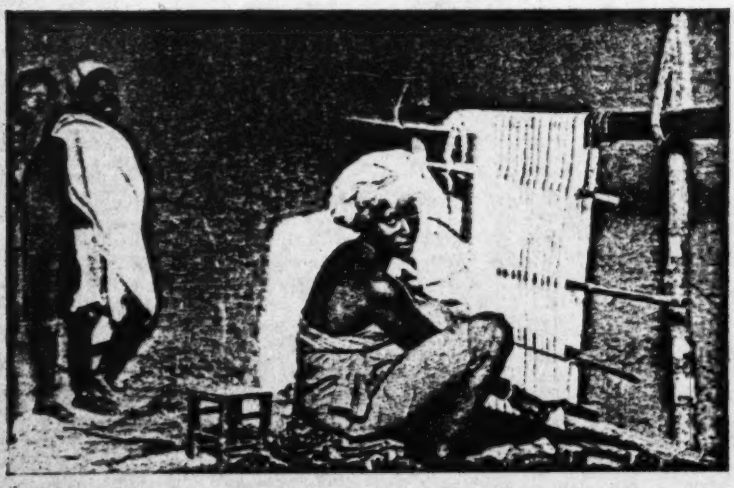
AN OLD POTTER WOMAN



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THE WOMEN'S LOOM

[facing p. 296]

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three cases) abandon the craft altogether. Pottery also involves a certain co-operation between the women which goes beyond the single household. The pots are made in the house, individually, but the burning of the pots takes place in an open space outside, and in this the women from different compounds work together, building the fire of grass and firewood and using it jointly for the burning of their pots. This co-operation neither expresses kinship and tribal unity, as in the case of the *konú* women dyers, nor is it based on an organized occupational union as in the case of the handicrafts of the men. Rather is it an occasional, free co-operation for the sake of expediency which is suggested by the particular technique of this handicraft.

The question of the limitation of a woman's craft to a particular section of the population reappears, with a different meaning, in weaving. The women's weaving is done on the upright broad loom (21 in. wide), which, though produced to-day by the Bida carpenters, appears to have had its origin in the south, in Yoruba country, where I have also seen it used as a woman's loom. This technique of weaving is said to be comparatively new, and not traditionally Nupe, and may indeed have come to Nupe from Yoruba in the times of the Yoruba wars, through the medium of Yoruba wives and slaves of the Nupe nobility. For women's weaving is restricted to the womenfolk of the upper classes of Nupe society; only wives and daughters of the nobility or the 'intelligentsia' possess a loom and practise the craft. There is, in fact, no house of the upper classes in which you will not find several of these looms being used by girls and women. Conversely, looms and craft are completely absent in the poorer man's home. The technique is handed on from mother to daughter. In very few cases only was I informed that a wife had been taught weaving by her mother-in-law. The profit involved in this work corresponds to the average profit of the men's handicrafts. One big embroidered cloth, 2 yards long, is sold for 10*s.* to 15*s.*, the material costing 5*s.*; the weaving takes thirty days (a cheaper, not embroidered, kind of cloth can be manufactured in half the time), and the profit per day is thus between 2*d.* and 3*d.* This gives us the explanation for the limitation of this craft to a specific social stratum. Only women who have servants (*bara* and formerly slaves) to help in the housework and to run errands for them can find the leisure for this long and delicate work. But the restriction of this woman's craft to one social stratum is only made possible through the existence of a unilateral endogamy—class endogamy—on the part of the women, who rarely marry beneath their station. If I am right, and these looms have been imported into Nupe from Yoruba, we have an interesting instance of class-restricted culture contact, that is, of cultural 'borrowing' which is at once fitted into, and made to subserve, the existing system of rigid social stratification.

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Ilorin, Oshogbo, or Ibadan. Another method is that the wholesale trader who buys up the smoked fish at the local riverside markets also trades them directly to Bida, Ilorin, &c.; certain enterprising traders with plenty of capital may also charter canoes and, travelling from place to place, buy up the local produce before it comes to the riverside markets.[1]

I have emphasized on various occasions the close correlation between markets and specialization of production. Here is the place to state the case once more. Generally speaking, trade and transport which bring the products of one area within reach of another involve competition, and through competition the elimination of inferior forms of production. Trade and transport must thus tend to foster (as they are in turn fostered by) local specialization. Certain developments in the agricultural and industrial production of Nupe reveal the effectiveness of these influences also in that culture. The people of Jebba, for example, do not grow sugar-cane or onions on their land, although on a similar type of land in Rabá and Ogudu these crops are cultivated. They explain this situation as being due to the fact that they are farmers on a less extensive scale, spending much time on fishing and (formerly) hunting; they prefer to import onions and sugar-cane from these other places. For certain handicrafts our evidence is even more striking, for here competition owing to an expansion of trade has only comparatively recently replaced an indigenous craft by imports from another area. The women of Leaba formerly practised pottery; but when the regular canoe traffic, which used to stop farther down the river, was brought up to Leaba, and pots made in Jebba and Gbajibo reached Leaba market, the Leaba women gave up their craft; their own pots, they explained, were inferior in quality to the imported product, owing to the inferior potter's clay found locally.

In small villages no trade is done, and markets are deserted, on days other than market-days. In large villages the markets do a little trade—in food only—also on ordinary week-days. On the day after a market there is often quite considerable trade in goods which did not find a buyer the previous day. On market-day the people begin to arrive between 9 and 10 o'clock. The market is in full swing by noon, and from 1 to 3 is the busiest time. After 4 the attendance begins to scatter, and soon after that the traders remove their goods, and the market is left empty. Every kind of trade and craft is represented even in the smaller village markets. In the roofed booths which every market possesses the more valuable goods are displayed—products of native industries as well as European goods. Tailors and leather-workers work in open huts. In the open square framed by these booths and huts agricultural produce, food-stuffs of every kind, live stock, pots, and tools are offered for sale.

[1] Lately the wives of the fishermen have attempted to break down the 'relay system' and to dispense with the services of middlemen, having begun to market their fish directly in Ilorin and Ibadan. A place like Ogudu, on the road from the river to Ilorin, which formerly formed an important exchange place, has now lost this transit trade in fish. The chief of Ogudu, to whom I owe this information, remarked regretfully that the women have 'begun to understand' (lit. 'have seen light').

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[25] Their work is not organized in a guild.

Beadworkers are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists of the " refining " of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[26]

Glass-makers (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the guild are Moslems. The head (*tura*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[27]

Tailoring and embroidery are individual crafts and members of the same household may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

Straw-hat makers use a " shape " of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a " lazy " occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

Mat-makers of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

Leather-workers formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[28]

Barber-doctors cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a " closed " craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also " *medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[29]

Drummers and dancers, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[25] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[26] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[27] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–8; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[29] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

Western crafts are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

Pottery is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.

Shea-butter manufacture is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

Indigo-dyeing is practised only by a few *Konú* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

Women's weaving is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

Weapons and tools include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

Dug-out canoes are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

Musical instruments include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

Gabi figures are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 198, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 106; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

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Crafts of Bida

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IT is something of a shock to find that the traditional glass-making families of Bida, whilst working very much as they always have worked in their own quarter of the town, are now using beer bottles as their raw material. They melt the green and brown bottles from Britain, Denmark, Germany and Holland in the same wood-burning, hand-blown furnaces in which they used to make their own glass "from local sands and stones with a little ash". The romance has been damaged and some interesting technology will soon have been lost; but from the worker's point of view, the change can only be for the better.

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The brass-workers too are finding their materials among "European" scrap, and aluminium is creeping in as the metal for some of the cheaper lines. Yet once the Nupe blacksmiths' groups smelted their own iron in charcoal-fired blast furnaces, force-fed by hand bellows, from ore quarried in the sugarloaf hills which stand up abruptly from the plain around Bida.

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Once, these smiths fashioned the weapons for the raiding parties which, less than one hundred years ago, were able to terrorise both sides of the Niger valley from above Jebba to below the confluence of the Benue.

These military activities were, it seems, the main cause of a system of craft guilds in Bida which appears to have been as complete as any known in mediaeval Europe. Every aspect of production and supply appears to have been strictly controlled by the state to meet the state's requirements. The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery

[Text continues on p. 141 -- Analyst]

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"King of the dancers"—
a Bida brass spinning toy

Making a glass bangle. The bellows man sits
behind the central furnace

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"King of the dancers" — A Bida -brass spinning Toy.
FF52 Nupe FF52 Bida

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[933]

The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery made the weapons, armour, saddle-cloths and accoutrements for the army, the agricultural workers produced food and the glass-makers produced the ornaments which formed a basis of trade when that seemed more worth while than a military operation. As is usual in a state drawing most of its profits from war and plunder, there grew in Bida a great demand for luxuries—ornamental vessels, beads and armlets, especially among the women. Many young men of Bida state, ruefully, that this taste lingers on.

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This guild system was too rigid easily to withstand fundamental changes. The blacksmiths, declining in number, now confine themselves to farm implements and a few furnishings for horsemen. The brass makers turn out a wide range of flat and hollow-ware, much of it coming loosely within the luxury classification. The embroiderers turn out fine

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hand work on gowns and there is a beautifully decorated, bright red cloth woven by the women; but few are sold outside the town. Makers of hats and mats turn out a range of products now largely aimed at a Europeanised market.

This falling-off of the traditional demand and an (at least) partial failure to find adequate new markets has already resulted in the loss of some skills and is a grave risk to the perpetuation of many others.

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The glass-makers, however, still work in their traditional way. The furnace is made from a clay pot heavily embedded in more clay. Into the base of the furnace are let two clay pipes of about two inches external diameter. These swell out to become bellows chambers some twelve or fifteen inches across closed by leather bags. One pumps away at them

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Heavy silver bracelets of a type worn by the beauties of Bida for centuries.

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323 with the hands, in an up-and-down movement, for minutes on end with the speed and beat of a slow-running Diesel. The strength and stamina required for this job in the small, round entrance-houses to Bida compounds where these craftsmen work, must be colossal.

The glass-maker himself, a senior craftsman, throws a few handsful of dried wood into the furnace, the pump-man pumps, and soon a metal rod is brought to white heat. The end of this rod is then stuck into a few pieces of broken bottle which are then held in the flame until they begin to melt and become a shapeless but easily-workable mass.

Two rods are then used to separate a small lump of the half-molten glass. The lump is pierced and then waved round and round, still in the flame, until a jointless, glass bangle has been made. White patterns in the glass are made by the addition of white, liquid clay early in the spinning process.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON p.147 -- Analyst]

323 Beads are made similarly, small amounts of molten glass being allowed to fall fixed distances to determine size and shape much as round shot used to be made in Europe.

323 439 This trade is suffering badly now. The products are very cheap, but they are in direct competition with more sophisticated, imported products.

One type of Bida bead is *not* cheap. It is very rare and is said to be made from "a sort of stone found a thousand miles away in the desert, only at one place. It is brought here only by women traders who go to Kano and Zinder to buy it from the desert people and very few know how to work on it". Accurate details are very difficult to come by, but this type of bead is very scarce and still greatly prized.

326 The brass workers fashion all but their most involved shapes on small anvils, beating rhythmically with a very small hammer. The patterns are made with a punch without any preliminary drawing of the intended pattern. As may be expected, the results vary but many are remarkably symmetrical and precise.

Much of the work is carried out in "silver", correctly coloured but bearing about as much likeness to real metal as does the average silver coinage. The Maria Theresa dollar, one of the traditional sources of [439] silver in the North, has been used as far south as Bida but the supply seems to be running out. In some places, craftsmen may be seen making Maria Theresa dollars . . .

Bida metal work is both interesting and disappointing at the same time. The folklore of the Nupe people makes many references to great skill in bronze casting and the Jebba bronzes are there to support the tale (*Nigeria* Magazine No. 43). There appears to be no casting now, though there remains an ability to make thin and very ductile metal sheet in a variety of alloys which can be worked over and over again without harm. Many of these metals have a quite surprising capacity to conduct heat, as anyone casually using a brass ash tray may quickly learn.

There is among the surviving guildsmen of Bida a reservoir of craftsmanship and familiarity with working glass, metals, leather and similar traditional materials. Without outside help, their skills will be lost and their young men will turn to other jobs. Perhaps there can never be an adequate, expanding market for their present products; but with a little help and advice, they could still be of greater value to their town and to Nigeria.

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu.

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found.

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Musuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—Man, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukū-ugetū* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pukunya*—Man 1931, 186).

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated—

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds: this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo.

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick: it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any

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suitable piece of the local sandstone or ironstone which may be found is used as beater without artificial shaping.

(*b*) when the pancake becomes sufficiently thin it is placed on the bottom of a small inverted pot and beaten again with the hand-beater to make it slightly convex.

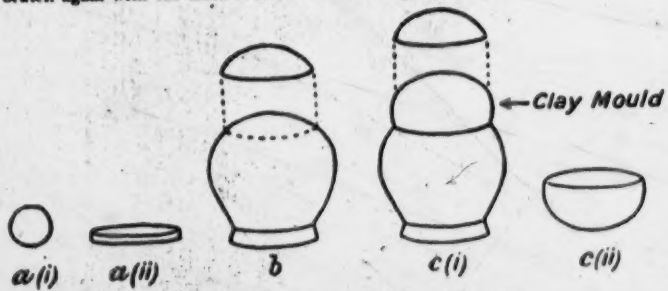

FIG. 1. STAGES A–C IN THE BUILDING OF THE POT.

(*c*) A clay mould is then placed upon the inverted pot and the clay beaten over this until it is shaped like an inverted bowl (*c* (i)).

It is then removed, turned over and put on one side to dry (*c* (ii)), and is eventually used as one half of the finished article.

(*d*) Processes (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) are repeated and a second bowl identical in size with the first is made to form the second half. When both halves have been allowed to harden a little, one is inverted and superimposed on the other so that the edges coincide. The operator cements the two halves together by smearing clay round the line of junction so that a hollow ball, like a flattened sphere, is produced without any orifice.

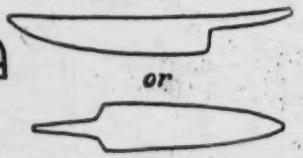

FIG. 2.

(*e*) A small hole, 2 inches in diameter, is cut in the centre of the top with an iron knife.

(*f*) To put the mouth on the pot, the operator takes a thin roll of clay and fits it to the edge of the hole by manipulation with the right hand while the pot is rotated by the left. The lip is shaped between the thumb and finger of the right hand and polished with a wetted rag.

(*g*) A thin roll of clay is then kneaded on to the pot to form a shoulder and the polishing with the wet rag continued.

(*h*) One or two handles are now attached; the operator takes a roll of clay of suitable length, attaches it first to the body of the pot, gives it an outward curve and attaches the other end to the mouth.

FIG. 3. STAGES *d* & *h* IN THE BUILDING OF THE POT.

(*j*) The exterior of the pot is polished by rubbing with a smooth, water-worn pebble (? of quartzite) and a piece of wetted rag.

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(*k*) Various decorations—all incised or stamped—are added :—

(i) By rocking and advancing a mussel shell held in the right hand, a 'compressed' chevron effect is produced (Fig. 4). The shell is 'rocked' on its rounded edge, and moved simultaneously in a direction at right angles to the plane of that edge.

(ii) A wide chevron is incised with the edge or point of a cowry shell (Fig. 5).

(iii) The sharp end of a (? snail) shell, the shape of a whelk shell, is used as a die to imprint a series of small holes or circles.

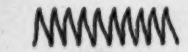

FIG. 4. COMPRESSED CHEVRON.

FIG. 5. WIDE CHEVRON.

(*l*) The pot is left to dry for 2 nights and 1 day (in the sun) and is then ready for firing. No wash is used before firing.

IV. *Firing of the Pot.*—A small circular kiln of mud is used, about 3 feet high, without a roof. There is an aperture at the bottom on one side for the insertion of fuel. On the inside of the kiln, above the top of the aperture, three or four protuberances are made in the mud wall, jutting out into the interior of the kiln. These act as brackets upon which a large crock rests.

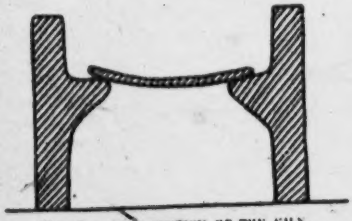

FIG. 6. CROSS SECTION OF THE KILN.

On the top of this crock the pots are piled and covered over with more crocks. A very small wood fire is lighted underneath. When the pots become black with smoke more wood is added, and the fire is allowed to burn fiercely for about an hour.

V. *Colouring of the Pot.*—

(i) Red.—If the pot is to be red it is now finished.

(ii) Brown.—In some cases a brown wash (I think of reddish earth) is used.

(iii) Black.—Some pots are blackened by the following process. Bark of the shea-nut tree is placed in a bowl of hot water, and then brought to the boil; pods of the locust-bean are added. In this decoction the pots are dipped while still hot from the firing; they are allowed to cool, placed in the ashes of the fire, and re-dipped when hot; the process is repeated about three times and the pot becomes finally almost coal-black.

The price of the finished product is about ½d. each. There are a few variations in style :—(i) Square shape instead of round. (ii) Number of handles varies. (iii) Larger sizes are made.

W. E. NICHOLSON.

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